

**LIST OF CLAIMS, SHOWING THE STATUS OF EACH CLAIM**

Underlining denotes added text while strikethrough denotes deleted text.

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. Claims 1-2. (cancelled)

3. (currently amended) A nucleic acid molecule comprising a first nucleotide sequence encoding a Bacillus subtilis phosphodiesterase PhoD signal sequence operatively linked to a second nucleotide sequence encoding a heterologous polypeptide.

4. (currently amended) A recombinant expression vector comprising a first DNA sequence encoding a Bacillus subtilis phosphodiesterase PhoD signal sequence operatively linked to a second DNA sequence encoding a heterologous polypeptide.

5. (currently amended) A host cell containing a recombinant expression vector comprising a first DNA sequence encoding a Bacillus subtilis phosphodiesterase PhoD signal sequence operatively linked to a second DNA sequence encoding a heterologous polypeptide.

6. (original) The host cell of claim 5, wherein said polypeptide is not naturally associated with a secretion signal peptide.

7. (currently amended) A method for producing a polypeptide, comprising culturing a host cell containing a recombinant expression vector comprising a first DNA sequence encoding a Bacillus subtilis phosphodiesterase PhoD signal sequence operatively linked to a second DNA sequence encoding a heterologous polypeptide such that the heterologous polypeptide is produced by the host cell.

8. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein the polypeptide is secreted by the host cell into a culture medium.

9. (original) The method of claim 8, further comprising recovering the polypeptide from the culture medium.

10. (currently amended) A method for producing a heterologous polypeptide in bacteria comprising:

- (a) culturing bacterial cells that (i) lack a functional *TatCy* gene and (ii) contain a recombinant expression vector comprising a first DNA sequence encoding a *Bacillus subtilis* phosphodiesterase PhoD signal sequence operatively linked to a second DNA sequence encoding a heterologous polypeptide such that the heterologous polypeptide is produced by the cells; and
- (b) recovering the heterologous polypeptide from the periplasm or the culture medium.

11. (currently amended) A process for producing a heterologous polypeptide in bacteria comprising:

- (a) culturing bacterial cells that (i) overexpress one or more *B. subtilis* Tat system genes encoding membrane-bound components thereof and (ii) contain a recombinant expression vector comprising a first DNA sequence encoding a *Bacillus subtilis* phosphodiesterase PhoD signal sequence operatively linked to a second DNA sequence encoding a heterologous polypeptide such that the heterologous polypeptide is produced by the cells; and
- (b) recovering the heterologous polypeptide from the periplasm or the culture medium.